

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (canceled)
2. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 42, wherein:
the insufflation means are reusable; and
[[t[he]] a contamination prevention means are effective to prevent a contaminant from
being carried by the insufflation medium to the insufflation means.
3. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 41 or claim 2, wherein:
the insufflation means are reusable; and
the contamination prevention means are effective to prevent a contaminant from
being carried by the insufflation medium to the patient being examined.
4. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41 or 2, wherein the contamination prevention
means comprise a non-return valve interposed between the insufflation means and the
speculum.
5. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 41 or 2 wherein the contamination
prevention means comprise a filter.
6. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 41 or 2, wherein the contamination
prevention means comprise a precipitator.
7. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 41 or 2 wherein the contamination
prevention means comprise a tortuous passageway.
8. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41 or 2, wherein the contamination prevention
means comprise a combination of two or more members selected from the group consisting
of non-return valves, filters, precipitators and tortuous passageways.
9. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 2, wherein:
the insufflation means comprise a resiliently compressible squeeze bulb; and
the insufflation medium is air.
10. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 41, wherein the insufflation means are
connected with the speculum and are disposable.

11. (canceled)
12. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 41 wherein the observation window is integral with the speculum.
13. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 12 wherein the observation window is selectively openable.
14. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 12, wherein the observation window is hingedly attached to the speculum.
15. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, or 12, wherein the insufflation means communicate with ~~an interior region~~ the insufflation chamber of the speculum via an inlet duct associated with the speculum.
16. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, or 12 wherein the insufflation means communicate with ~~an interior region~~ the insufflation chamber of the speculum via an inlet duct associated with an eyepiece.
17. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 16, wherein the eyepiece is disposable.
18. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, or 12, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a contamination prevention means are disposable.
19. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, or 12, wherein the contamination prevention means are effectively integral with the speculum.
20. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, or 12, further comprising:
 - an inlet port for operatively connecting the insufflation means with the speculum and permitting internal pressurization of the speculum; and
 - the contamination prevention means adapted to prevent the insufflation medium from passing from an internal side to an external side of the inlet port while the insufflation medium is in use.

21. A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, or 12, further comprising obturation means for facilitating insertion of the spectrum into the bowel cavity of the patient.
22. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 21, wherein the obturation means comprise:
an obturator having an elongated stem adapted to pass axially through the speculum;
and
a head adapted to protrude at least partially beyond the insertion end, the head connected to the elongated stem.
23. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 22, wherein the obturator may axially withdraw through the observation end of the sigmoidoscope.
24. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 23, wherein the observation window is adapted to be closed and sealed after the obturator is withdrawn.
25. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 21, wherein the obturation means comprise:
a hollow, generally tubular obturation sleeve slidably disposed in axial telescopic engagement with the speculum;
a plurality of resiliently deformable petal formations connected to the insertion end and selectively movable between a domed closed configuration and a withdrawn open configuration.
26. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 25, wherein:
the obturator is external to the speculum; and
the petal formations are generally curved inwardly toward one another.
27. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 26 wherein the petal formations are resiliently biased inwardly toward the closed configuration and are displaced progressively outwardly toward the open configuration by manual sliding of the obturation sleeve away from the insertion end.
28. The sigmoidoscope of claim 41, further comprising:
a connection to the insufflation means; and
contamination prevention means for preventing contaminated insufflation medium from contacting the insufflation means.

29. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 28, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a non-return valve.
30. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 28 or claim 29, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a filter.
31. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 28 or 29, wherein the connection comprises an eyepiece.
32. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 28 or 29, wherein the insufflation means comprises an insufflation bulb.
33. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 28, further comprising coupling means for optically coupling a light source at an outer circumferential edge of the speculum.
34. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 33, further comprising:
an observation means; and
a releasable coupling operably connecting the observation means to the light head adapted for releasable coupling to reusable observation means.
35. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 34, wherein the observation means comprise a light conducting system.
36. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 34, wherein the observation means comprise a light imaging system.
37. A sigmoidoscope according to claim 35 or 36, wherein the observation means is connected to the speculum via an external connection head.
38. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 28, 29, 33, 34, 35 or 36, the elongate substantially rigid tube having light transmission properties.
39. A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims 28, 29, 33, 34, 35 or 36, wherein the speculum is made of a plastic.

40. The sigmoidoscope of claim 41, wherein the integral manually operable insufflation means is adapted for disposal with the speculum to prevent cross contamination between patients due to contamination of the insufflation medium.

41. A sigmoidoscope comprising:
a disposable speculum comprising:
an elongate substantially rigid tube having an observation end and an insertion end;
a side wall extending along the substantially rigid tube from the observation end to the insertion end and defining a lumen; wherein
the insertion end of the speculum is adapted for insertion into the rectum and sigmoid colon of a patient;

~~connection coupling~~ means comprising a light head housing a light source and
adjacent the observation end of the speculum adapted to allow a reusable light source to be connected to the observation end and to project light through the speculum into the rectum and sigmoid colon of the patient;

~~[[an]]~~ a fluid-tight observation window extending across the observation end of the speculum adapted in combination with the interior of the speculum to define a fluid-tight insufflation chamber to isolate the light source from the lumen; and

manually operable insufflation means adapted to insufflate the rectum and sigmoid of the patient through the speculum with an insufflation medium susceptible to contamination from within the rectum and sigmoid colon, the insufflation medium being conveyed directly from the insufflation means to the ~~lumen~~ insufflation chamber by a gas conveying insufflation tube without contacting ~~a light head housing the light source~~ the coupling means.

42. A sigmoidoscope as claimed in claim 41, wherein the observation window forms at least part of the ~~connection coupling~~ means.

43. (canceled)